

Appl. No. 10/821,040
Amendment dated May 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 7, 2005

Remarks

Reconsideration of the application is requested. Claim 1 has been amended to correct an informality and to specify that the first set of liquid collection channels are interspersed with the second set of liquid collection channels in each of the liquid collection regions. Claim 1 has also been amended to specify that the first set of liquid collection channels in the first and second liquid collection regions preferentially flows liquid into the first sump and the second set of liquid collection channels in the first and second liquid collection regions preferentially flows liquid into the second sump. Claim 2 has been amended to include first and second downcomers associated with the openings in the first and second sums, respectively. Claim 31 has been amended in a manner similar to the amendments made to claim 1. Claim 32 has been amended to specify that generally equal first and second quantities of liquid are preferentially directed into the first and second sums, respectively. A clarifying amendment has been made to claim 39 and new claims 41-43 have been added. Claims 1 and 3-43 are now present in the application.

The objection to claim 1 based on the presence of the word "and" at the end of the claim has been overcome by amending claim 1 to remove that word.

The rejection of claims 1, 3-6, 31-36, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Huber is respectfully traversed. As amended, independent claims 1 and 31 specify that first and second sets of liquid collection channels are interspersed within each of the first and second liquid collection regions and are associated with the first and second sums in a manner so that liquid preferentially flows through the drain openings of the first set of liquid collection channels into the first sum and preferentially flows through the drain openings of the second set

Appl. No. 10/821,040
Amendment dated May 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 7, 2005

of liquid collection channels into the second sump. Huber, by contrast, teaches that liquid collecting troughs 16 that feed into one of the two header troughs 17 are not interspersed with the troughs 16 that feed into the other header trough 17. As a result, there are no liquid collection regions in Huber in which interspersed first and second sets of liquid collection channels feed into different sumps. For example, in the hemispheric collection region illustrated in Fig. 4 of Huber, one set of troughs 16 in one quadrant feeds into one header trough 17 while the other set of troughs 16 in the other illustrated quadrant feeds into the other header trough 17. Because these two sets of troughs 16 are not interspersed with each other, Huber does not teach or suggest the invention of claims 1 and 31, or the claims which depend therefrom.

Claim 3 additionally specifies that a first downcomer is associated with the opening in the first sump and a second downcomer is associated with the opening in the second sump. Huber teaches away from the invention of claim 3 by teaching that the openings in the two header troughs 17 feed into a single, centrally-positioned collecting funnel 8 and tube 9.

The rejection of claims 1, 3-7, 18, 19, 31, 32, 36, and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Robinson et al. is respectfully traversed. Robinson teaches that each of the liquid collection channels 16 feeds liquid through its opposite ends into two sumps, i.e. into both the circumferential sump 4 and one of the parallel sumps 5 or into two of the parallel sumps 5. By teaching that each of the liquid collection channels feeds two sumps, rather than preferentially feeding one or the other of the sumps, Robinson et al. teaches away from the presently claimed invention in which a first set of liquid collection channels preferentially feeds one sump and a second set of liquid collection channels preferentially feeds a second sump.

Appl. No. 10/821,040
Amendment dated May 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 7, 2005

Moreover, Robinson fails to teach or suggest the use of upwardly extending deflectors in the manner claimed.

For the foregoing reasons, each of the claims remaining in this application is believed to be allowable over the applied references and such favorable action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should feel that a telephone interview would facilitate resolution of any outstanding issues, he is asked to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,
HOVEY WILLIAMS LLP

By 
Michael B. Hurd
Reg. No. 32,241
2405 Grand Boulevard, Suite 400
Kansas City, Missouri 64108
816/474-9050

ATTORNEYS FOR APPLICANT(S)

(Docket No. KOCH37078)